

## HR Weekly Podcast

12/06/07

Today is December 6, 2007, and welcome to the HR weekly podcast from the State Office of Human Resources. This week's topic concerns tips on preparing for and dealing with workplace violence.

Workplace violence is defined as assaults, threats, violent acts, or harassment in the workplace that cause substantial risk of or physical harm to individuals or company resources. Incidents involving violence in the workplace affect not only the parties involved but also the entire agencies' morale and productivity.

To help prevent workplace violence, every agency should have an active workplace violence policy. The policy should have 'zero' tolerance for employees who are violent in the workplace as well as outline the progressive discipline actions that can be taken against employees. Additionally, the plan should clearly outline how the employer will handle investigations of violence in the workplace and how employees should proceed if they are aware of a co-worker's violent behavior. Creating a workplace violence policy is only half of the battle. Everyone from senior management to part-time workers must understand their roles, responsibilities, and liabilities for workplace violence.

Employers must be sure to conduct thorough reference checks. Too often people slip through the cracks because of negligent background checks, resulting in hiring someone with a history of violence. Employers should educate and provide programs that discourage violence. The programs include, but are not limited to: diversity training, workshops on stress management, grievance procedures, and employee assistance programs.

In the unfortunate event that a violent situation does arise in the workplace, handle the situation head on. Conduct a thorough investigation, document all information, and discipline the responsible parties accordingly. More importantly, show concern for those who have been harmed, conduct debriefing meetings for those involved, control rumors, and show employees that measures are being taken to return the workplace to normal.

Are you prepared to handle a violent situation in the workplace? Please find a list of questions at the end of the text of this podcast that you can ask yourself. Also, the text of this podcast contains a link to the state OHR workplace violence guidelines.

If you have any questions or concerns about this issue, please call your HR Consultant at 737-0900.

Thank you.

### Self-Assessment Questions

- Do you have a specific policy that addresses *zero* tolerance for workplace violence?

-What is your reference checking policy? Do you conduct references or do you use investigative reference checking services? Do you screen all employees, including contractors, temporaries, interns, co-ops, etc.?

- Have you educated your employees and management about their roles and responsibilities regarding workplace violence?
- How do you ensure upward communication from employees and supervisors of incidents with potential violence consequences?
- How often do you assess the effectiveness of your problem resolution process?
- Is security adequate?

To view the state OHR workplace violence guidelines please [Click Here](#).